

than significant, mitigation measures may be recommended to further lessen potential project impacts. As required by CEQA, this section will address all reasonably feasible mitigation measures that can reduce adverse impacts to below a level of significance. According to CEQA, the term “mitigation measures” refers to those items that are in addition to standard conditions, uniform codes, or project design features that may also reduce potential impacts. This section will also indicate if any of the proposed mitigation measures also have significant impacts.

**Summary of Impact after Mitigation:** An indication of whether or not any significant impacts remain following implementation of all reasonable and feasible mitigation measures.

Note that the cumulative impacts for each environmental topic are discussed in Section 5, Cumulative Impacts.



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## 4.1 - Aesthetics

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This section evaluates the potential impacts of the Proposed Alternative Project on scenic vistas or views and on any nearby scenic highways or corridors, and evaluates whether the Proposed Alternative Project would create a significant amount of light or glare in an area.

Visual resources are the natural and cultural features of the environment that can be seen by the public, and influence the aesthetic appeal an area may have for viewers. Visual resource impacts are normally associated with the visible contrast between proposed facilities and the existing elements of the surrounding landscape. They are especially important to areas where outdoor recreation draws tourism, as these places tend to also have unique natural resources which are enjoyed by people who specifically come to the area to experience these resources in their natural state.

The overall objective of this section is to describe existing landscape and visual resource conditions at the affected portions of the Proposed Alternative Project site and surrounding vicinity, to describe how changes in the Proposed Alternative Project have altered the effects to the aesthetic resources as compared to the Original Proposed Project, and to identify the impacts that could result from the implementation of the Proposed Alternative Project.

### 4.1.1 - Existing Conditions

The Moon Camp project site (Tentative Tract No. 16136) is located approximately midway along the north shore of Big Bear Lake, at the eastern edge of the Fawnskin Community. The 62.43-acre site slopes upward from the lakeshore and State Route 38 (SR-38) (Lakeshore Drive) from a lake surface elevation of approximately 6,747 feet above mean sea level (msl) to approximately 6,960 feet msl at the northeast boundary. Slopes vary from 5 to 40 percent and continue upward beyond the property to a ridgeline exceeding 7,800 feet msl on the north. The on-site variation in elevation is approximately 213 feet. The entire area is within a County of San Bernardino Scenic Resources Overlay, the purpose of which is to “provide development standards that will protect, preserve and enhance the aesthetic resources of the County.”

The site is endowed with a variety of flora and fauna, including Jeffrey pine forest, pebble plain habitat, and numerous species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. Man-made modifications of the site include SR-38, three non-operational water wells, dirt roads, numerous footpaths and trails.

The Jeffrey pine forest is moderately open (40-59 percent coverage) with scattered trees and very limited understory growth. A total of 2,772 trees with trunk diameters of 6 inches or more have been counted from aerial photographs. The understory growth consists of scattered chaparral shrubs and grasses. The overall visual effect is almost a park-like atmosphere rather than wild in nature. Houses and structures built on neighboring properties are also visible through the trees.

A small area (0.69 acre) of pebble plain habitat exists on a hillside near the western end of the project site. This endangered habitat consists of small cushion-forming plants, annuals, grasses and succulents that are well-spaced on a surface of clay soil mixed with pebbles and gravel. The area has been disturbed by unauthorized off-road traffic.

The lakeshore area nearest Big Bear Lake consists primarily of herbaceous species typical of saturated soils and several seeding cottonwood trees. Vegetation is patchy above the high-water level, where small stands of Jeffrey pine are interspersed with open meadows and grasslands and scattered patches of willow.

SR-38, which winds along the shoreline in an east-west direction through the site, has been designated by both the State of California and the County of San Bernardino as a “Scenic Highway.” In addition, the U. S. Forest Service (USFS) has designated SR-38 as a “scenic byway.” The meandering nature of the roadway paralleling the waterfront results in slower vehicle speeds and provides numerous vistas, through the trees, of the lake and surrounding mountains. At present, the roadway is narrow and there are few opportunities to park and view the lake.

Directly west and north of the site, along Canyon Road and Flicker Road, single-family homes are visible. Likewise, homes can be observed to the east and southeast of the site along SR-38 on both sides of the road. Views from Big Bear Lake toward the project site consist primarily of undeveloped lakefront and open pine forest and vacant land on gently sloping mountainside; however, at least a third of the site on the east lies behind the existing lakeshore residential development along SR-38.

Because the project site is currently undeveloped, there is no light or glare generated on the site. At night, headlights on vehicles traveling along SR-38 are visible on and off the site.

### **Scoping Meeting Comments**

During the March 31, 2007, scoping meeting, questions and comments regarding aesthetics included the following:

- Will the building footprint and heights affect/impact views from existing neighboring homes?
- Address the proposed location of the marina and impacts to surrounding properties from light, noise, trash, and other issues.
- Will there be restrictions on building footprints?
- Address how 50 new homes will contribute to increased ambient noise and light in the vicinity.

Responses to these comments are included in the text of this section.

#### **4.1.2 - Thresholds of Significance**

The significance of potential aesthetic impacts was determined based upon the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (CCR §§ 15000-15387, Appendix G). The Proposed

Alternative Project would be considered to have a significant adverse aesthetic or visual impact if it were to result in any of the following:

- A substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas;
- Substantial damage to scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- Substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- Creation of a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

#### **4.1.3 - Project Impact Analysis**

The impact analysis focuses on the degree to which the Proposed Alternative Project could directly or indirectly diminish or enhance the existing visual quality and character of the area from public viewing areas, such as SR-38 or Big Bear Lake.

##### **Views**

The Proposed Alternative Project differs substantially from the Original Proposed Project in the way it affects both the short range views and the long range views.

The views in the Original Proposed Project were significantly disrupted by the introduction of 31 residences to the lakefront and along the highway. These residences were highly visible from the lake, from the road, and in the view shed of existing residences situated above. In contrast, the Proposed Alternative Project has eliminated the lakeshore residences and a number of lots on the north side of the highway due to the introduction of almost 6 acres of open space conservation easements and a minimum lot size of one half acre. Another major difference between the Original Proposed Project and the Proposed Alternative Project is the removal of the highway realignment segment of the Original Proposed Project. The realignment would have dramatically affected the aesthetics, both by destroying the rural, undulating character of the scenic highway and by removal of significantly more trees to achieve the objective. Over 600 trees were spared with the elimination of the realignment feature.

**View Looking West along Highway 38.** Exhibits 4.1-1 and 4.1-2 show the view along SR-38 for existing conditions and simulated project conditions without a landscape buffer. The view is taken from the east side of the project as SR-38 enters the site. Lots 37, 38, and 39 are partially visible from this viewpoint. As indicated in the simulations, the lakeshore remains undisturbed. In this first impression of the project from the eastern approach, partial views of only 3 houses are visible in Exhibit 4.1-2. The winding configuration of SR-38 results in no more than 3 or 4 houses visible in one glance. Only 9 lots actually touch the SR-38 right-of-way and one third of the route through the site has no development on either side. With the eye drawn to the lake, the actual visual impression of added residential development will be relatively insignificant.

**Views of the Marina.** A principal visual alteration from the Original Proposed Project is the proposed marina, which has been reduced in size from the original 103 slips to only 55. The proposed marina will consist of roofless, floating docks that will be seasonally located at the site. During winter months, these floating docks will be stored off-site. The marina has also been relocated from the east to the west side of the project area. Relocation of the marina will result in less of an obstruction in the view from the existing residences in the most densely populated Fawnskin area, but will be more visible to the residences in the outlying areas where impacts are reduced by distance. Exhibit 4.1-3 is a view of the proposed marina site looking south from North Shore Drive towards the shoreline as it currently exists. Exhibit 4.1-4 is a simulated view of the proposed floating marina and associated parking and walkways looking south from North Shore Drive. Exhibit 4.1-5 is a “before” view of the marina site looking north from Big Bear Lake, and Exhibit 4.1-6 shows the simulated view of the marina in place with its associated boat launching ramp. As can be seen in these Exhibits, the proposed marina is a moveable floating facility with a low profile. The addition of boats in season will add dimension and height, but will also introduce color and interest to the shoreline. To the average recreationist, boats and activity are positive visual experiences.

**Views from Flicker Road.** The density of the units has been decreased in the Proposed Alternative Project and the units have been repositioned. As a result, the proposed lots are now arranged so that views of them are restricted to the area near the access roads, where one can look up the street and see houses but still experience the woodland. There would be very few houses visible from the water, as the shoreline set-back would give to homes within cover of the trees. With decreased density, the view of individual residences are also more open. Exhibits 4.1-7 and 4.1-8 illustrate the differences in the two projects (Original Proposed Project and Proposed Alternative Project) as seen from Flicker Road. Exhibit 4.1-7 demonstrates the Proposed Alternative Project with larger, more open lots. Exhibit 4.1-8 indicates the density of the Original Proposed Project. These exhibits demonstrate that views of the lake and SR-38 would be much more visible from the properties along Flicker Road with the revised / reduced density.

**Views from Big Bear Lake.** Perhaps the most significant visual difference in the Proposed Alternative Project is the elimination of all lakefront residential development south of SR-38. A visual simulation of the Proposed Alternative Project from the lake with and without development (as shown in Exhibits 4.1-9 through 4.1-10) demonstrates how much scenic vista has been preserved in the Proposed Alternative Project. The entire foreground south of SR-38 is relatively unaltered. Seen from a distance, development is very unobtrusive. With the addition of a landscape buffer, development will be minimally obtrusive even in the closer views, as demonstrated in Exhibit 4.1-10. The landscape buffer, coupled with the reduction of the overall density of the lots helps blend the sparse development into the trees and natural landscape.

## Lighting

The Proposed Alternative Project would result in additional light sources during nighttime operation hours in an area where there are currently no sources of light. This project has the potential to affect both wildlife and the rural residential quality of the area. In order to diminish this effect, mitigation measures were introduced which include stricter control of light sources than provided by County ordinances. To minimize light pollution, lighting in the project area will be directed downward, be fully shielded and will be the minimum amount necessary for safe operations. Even with these measures, light pollution will remain an unavoidable impact, but at a greatly reduced level from the Original Proposed Project.

## Temporary Impacts

Temporary impacts are generally associated with construction activities. The visual appearance of the site would be temporarily altered by grading and construction activity. The primary impact will be from construction of the access roads and improvement of SR-38. Since the residential lots will be sold for custom residences, construction activity on houses will be intermittent and individual. With custom housing lots, there is less likelihood of concurrent construction of multiple structures. Standard conditions and uniform codes help to preclude construction activities from causing excessive impacts, as they limit construction hours and impose dust and noise control measures. Additional mitigation measures were added to the 2005 Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), including measures to locate the construction staging area away from the existing residential uses.

## Summary of Impacts

Using the thresholds of significance identified in Section 4.1.2 above, aesthetic impacts are considered potentially significant. However, the Proposed Alternative Project would have substantially fewer aesthetic impacts than the Original Proposed Project. As mentioned previously, the attributes of the Proposed Alternative Project, including reduction in development intensity, elimination of the development of lakefront lots, elimination of the realignment of SR-38, reduction and relocation of the proposed marina, increase in permanently protected open space, and reduction in the number of trees removed from the site, enhance the aesthetic values of the project to reduce aesthetic impacts. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures A-1 through A-4, implementation of the Proposed Alternative Project would result in less than significant aesthetic impacts.

## Level of Significance before Mitigation

Potentially Significant.

### 4.1.4 - Standard Conditions and Uniform Codes

As previously stated, the County of San Bernardino identifies the Moon Camp site within a Scenic Resources (SR) Overlay District and SR-38 as a County Scenic Highway. The State of California has also designated this portion of SR-38 as a “Scenic Highway,” and the USFS has designated SR-38 as

a “scenic byway.” The intent of the SR Overlay District is to “provide development standards that will protect, preserve and enhance the aesthetic resources of the County.” The SR Overlay District also implements state and federal programs regarding scenic highway routes.

Provisions of the SR Overlay District apply to the following:

- Areas with unique views of the County’s desert, mountain and valley areas or any other aesthetic natural land formations; and
- An area extending 200 feet on both sides of the ultimate right-of-way of State or County designated Scenic Highways as set forth in the County General Plan (the area may vary with vegetation and topography along the right-of-way).

According to the provisions of the SR Overlay District, the following development standards and criteria are used to evaluate compliance with the intent of the SR Overlay District:

- **Building and Structure Placement.** Placement of buildings and structures shall be compatible with and should not detract from the visual setting or obstruct significant views.
- **Review Area.** The proposed project shall be designed to blend into the natural landscape and maximize visual attributes of the natural vegetation and terrain. Project design should also provide for the maintenance of a natural open space, which should be visible from the right-of-way.
- **Access Drives.** Right-of-way access drives should be avoided.
- **Landscaping.** The removal of native vegetation, especially trees, shall be minimized and replacement vegetation and landscaping shall be compatible with the local environment and, where practicable, capable of surviving with a minimum of maintenance and supplemental water. Landscaping and plantings should not obstruct significant views, either when installed or when they reach maturity.
- **Roads, Pedestrian Walkways, Parking and Storage Areas.** Any large scale development should restrict the number of access points by providing common access road. Parking and outside storage areas should be screened from view to the maximum extent possible from a Scenic Highway, by the placement of buildings and structures, or by landscaping and plantings which are compatible with the local environment. Where practicable, landscaping plantings must also be capable of surviving with a minimum of maintenance and supplemental water.
- **Above Ground Utilities.** Utilities shall be constructed and routed underground except in those situations where natural features prevent the underground siting or where safety considerations necessitate above ground construction and routing. Aboveground utilities shall be constructed and routed to minimize detrimental effects on the visual setting of the designated area. Where it is practical, above ground utilities shall be screened from view of the Scenic Highway by existing topography, or by placement of buildings and structures.



- **Grading.** The alteration of the natural topography of the site shall be minimized and shall avoid detrimental effects to the visual setting of the designated area and the existing natural drainage system. Alterations of the natural topography should be screened from view from either the scenic highway or the adjacent scenic or recreational resource by landscaping and planting which harmonize with the natural landscape of the designated area and which are capable of surviving with a minimum of maintenance and supplemental water.
- **Signs.** Primary freestanding signs greater than 18 square feet are prohibited in the SR Overlay District.

### **General Plan Goals, Policies, and Actions**

The San Bernardino County General Plan lists several Goals, Policies and Actions related to the Aesthetics for this project and they will be incorporated into the development plan for this project. In the February 2007 Final Program EIR it states that:

“Many of the vistas that have been deemed as ‘scenic’ are located along roadways, especially throughout the Mountain and Desert regions. To ensure the quality and character of these locations are not compromised through obtrusive development, improvements of any kind are subject to additional land use and aesthetic controls outlined under the County’s Scenic Highway Overlay.”

These controls include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Review of proposed development along scenic highways to ensure preservation of scenic values for the traveling public and those seeking a recreational driving experience.
- Expanding the established right-of-way of a designated Scenic Corridor to extend 200 feet to either side, measured from the outside edge of the right-of-way.
- Development along these corridors will be required to demonstrate through visual analysis that proposed improvements are compatible with the scenic qualities present.
- More restrictive sign ordinance standards regarding visual quality and size will be imposed.
- New development will be required to provide ample recreation and scenic opportunities along Scenic Corridors.
- Development will be restricted along prominent ridgelines and hilltops.
- Site plans will be reviewed to determine that specific architectural design, landscaping and grading are done to prevent obstruction of scenic views and to blend with surrounding landscape.
- Off-site advertising signs (i.e., billboards) will be prohibited within and adjacent to all scenic corridors.

#### 4.1.5 - Project Design Features

The Proposed Alternative Project has included design features intended to reduce aesthetic impacts, which the Original Proposed Project did not incorporate. These include:

- View envelopes for the existing and proposed residences are kept open to the greatest extent possible;
- View corridors are established; and
- Conservation easements, LOT A and LOT B on the Tentative Tract Map, although primarily intended for conservation of wildlife and vegetative resources, also serve as preservation of visual aesthetics in their natural state. They provide a buffer between the existing residences in Fawnskin, the proposed residential lots on the west side of the Moon Camp Project, and the waterline.

#### 4.1.6 - Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures were developed in the December 2005 Final EIR and are included and modified as a result of the reduced density and redesign of the Proposed Alternative Project:

##### Short-Term Aesthetic/Light and Glare Impact Mitigation

- **A-1a** - Construction equipment staging areas shall be located away from existing residential uses. Appropriate screening (i.e., temporary fencing with opaque material) shall be used to buffer views of construction equipment and material, when feasible. Staging locations shall be indicated on Project Grading Plans.
- **A-1b** - All construction-related lighting associated with the construction of new roadways, improvements to SR-38 and the installation of utilities shall be located and aimed away from adjacent residential areas. Lighting shall use the minimum wattage necessary to provide safety at the construction site. A construction safety lighting plan shall be submitted to the County for review along with Grading Permit applications for the subdivision of the lots.

##### Long-Term Aesthetic Impact Mitigation

- **A-2a** - All homes shall provide a two-car garage with automatic garage doors.
- **A-2b** - New development shall be subordinate to the natural setting and minimize reflective surfaces. Building materials including siding and roof materials shall be selected to blend in hue and brightness with the surroundings. Colors shall be earth tones: shades of grays, tans, browns, greens, and pale yellows; and shall be consistent with the mountain character of the area.
- **A-2c** - Outside parking/storage areas associated with the boat dock activities shall be screened from view by the placement of landscaping and plantings which are compatible with the local

environment and, where practicable, are capable of surviving with a minimum of maintenance and supplemental water.

- **A-2d** - Construction plans for each individual lot shall include the identification and placement of vegetation with the mature height of trees listed. Landscaping and plantings should not obstruct significant views, within or outside of the project, either when installed or when they reach maturity. The removal of existing vegetation shall not be required to create views.
- **A-2e** - A Note shall be placed on the Composite Development Plan stating that during construction plans review and prior to issuance of building permits for each lot, the building inspector shall refer to the Mitigation Monitoring and Compliance Program regarding these aesthetic impact mitigation measures. The building inspector shall coordinate with the Advance Planning Division the review and approval of building plans in relation to these aesthetic impact mitigation measures, prior to approval and issuance of building permits.

#### **Long-Term Scenic Highway Impact Mitigation**

- **A-3a** - Any entry sign for the development shall be a monument style sign compatible with the mountain character, preferably, rock or rock appearance.
- **A-3b** - Prior to recordation of the tract map (and/or any ground disturbance, whichever occurs first), landscaping or revegetation plans for lettered lots (A through D) shall be submitted to and approved by the San Bernardino County Land Use Services Department.

#### **Long-Term Light and Glare Impacts**

- **A-4a** - All exterior lighting shall be designed and located as to avoid intrusive effects on adjacent residential properties and undeveloped areas adjacent to the project site. Low-intensity street lighting and low-intensity exterior lighting shall be used throughout the development to the extent feasible. Lighting fixtures shall use shielding, if necessary to prevent spill lighting on adjacent off-site uses.
- **A-4b** - Lighting used for various components of the development plan shall be reviewed for light intensity levels, fixture height, fixture location and design by an independent engineer, and reviewed and approved by the County Building and Safety Division to ensure that light emitted from the proposed project does not intrude onto adjacent residential properties.
- **A-4c** - The project shall use minimally reflective glass. All other materials used on exterior buildings and structures shall be selected with attention to minimizing reflective glare.
- **A-4d** - Vegetated buffers shall be used along SR-38 to reduce light intrusion on residential development and on forested areas located adjacent to the project site. The vegetation buffers shall be reflected on the master landscape plan submitted to and approved by the County Land Use Services Department prior to the issuance of the first grading permit.

- **A-4e** - All outdoor light fixtures shall be cutoff luminaries and only high- or low-pressure sodium lamps shall be used.
- **A-4f** - Mitigation Measures A-4a thru 4e shall be included within the Conditions, Covenants, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) of the Home Owner's Association (HOA).

#### **Cumulative Impact Mitigation**

No mitigation measures are recommended for cumulative impacts.

No additions to the mitigation measures proposed in the 2005 Final EIR (as modified) are required.

#### **4.1.7 - Level of Significance after Mitigation**

**Less than significant.** The Proposed Alternative Project will permanently alter the aesthetics of the area near the lake and the scenic highway from natural open space to low density residential use. Implementation of mitigation measures along with standard conditions and CC&Rs will assist in blending this new neighborhood into the overall general character of the Fawnskin Community and reduce overall impacts to less than significant.



TENTATIVE TRACT No. 16136



Proposed Additional Landscape Buffer Area and Evergreen Planting  
No Access from North Shore Drive to any Lot.

Exhibit 4.1-1  
Existing View Looking West from North Shore Drive

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
MOON CAMP RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION PROJECT

Source: Bauer Planning & Environmental Services Inc (September 26, 2007).



Not To Scale

Michael Brandman Associates

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TENTATIVE TRACT No. 16136



Proposed Additional Landscape Buffer Area and Evergreen Planting  
 No Access from North Shore Drive to any Lot

Source: Bauer Planning & Environmental Services Inc (September 26, 2007).



Not To Scale

Michael Brandman Associates

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## Exhibit 4.1-2 Simulated View Looking West from North Shore Drive

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
 MOON CAMP RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION PROJECT







TENTATIVE TRACT No. 16136



Source: Bauer Planning & Environmental Services Inc (September 26, 2007).



Michael Brandman Associates

Not To Scale

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## Exhibit 4.1-3 Existing View of Proposed Marina Looking South from North Shore Drive

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
MOON CAMP RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION PROJECT





Exhibit 4.1-4  
 Simulated View of Proposed Marina Looking South from North Shore Drive

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
 MOON CAMP RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION PROJECT

Source: Bauer Planning & Environmental Services Inc (September 26, 2007).



Not To Scale

00520089 - 03/2009 | 4.1-4\_Sim\_View\_Marina.ai





**TENTATIVE TRACT No. 16136**



View Point from Big Bear Lake

Source: Bauer Planning & Environmental Services Inc (September 26, 2007).



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**Exhibit 4.1-5  
Existing View of Proposed Marina Looking North from Big Bear Lake**

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
MOON CAMP RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION PROJECT

